



Historic Preservation Center
190 Southeast 12 Terrace
Miami, Florida 33131
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November 5, 1990

1990-91

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Mr. Arthur King, Chairman
Miami Heritage Conservation Board
City of Miami
City Hall
3500 Pan American Drive
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Mr. King:

It has come to the attention of Dade Heritage Trust that the privately owned residence located at 3939 Hardie Road, Coconut Grove, Florida 33133, is the former structure housing the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club.

This frame residence built in 1901 is a fine and unusual example of frame vernacular architecture as found in Dade County during the turn of the century. The arched details, use of materials and size make it of particular architectural import.

The original owner was the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club whose Commodore was Ralph Middleton Munroe. The BBYC is considered to be Dade County's oldest social institution and is the second oldest yacht club in the South.

As a result of the 1887 Regatta at Biscayne Bay the Club was organized and R. M. Munroe became its Commodore until 1909; Kirk Munroe served as Secretary until 1922. R. M. Munroe became a permanent resident of Coconut Grove in 1886 when he purchased 42 acres of original Besley homestead from John W. Frow. The following year he built a two-story boathouse, the first home to be built on the Grove waterfront, and in 1891, constructed the Barnacle. In 1903, Mr. Munroe started Camp Biscayne, a cooperative kitchen, and in 1909, helped establish St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. R. M. Munroe lived to be 82 and his death in 1933 saw the passing of one of the most important and instrumental persons in the growth and development of the Grove.

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The first headquarters of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club was in the second floor of the Munroe boathouse. Through the efforts of the Club's members, the Cape Florida Lighthouse was preserved in the late 1800's. In 1901, the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club constructed its first clubhouse south of what we know today as the Barnacle. The Club served from 1906 to 1926 as the center for Coconut Grove social activities. In 1925, Bob Erwin, a local contractor, bought the house for \$1 and barged the house to its present site at 3939 Hardie Road where it is now a private residence.

The significance of the original Biscayne Bay Yacht Club lies not only in the structure itself and its architecture, but in the history of those who built and used the structure and were such an important part of the history and development of the entire Coconut Grove community.

We hope you will seriously and favorably recommend Historic Designation of this property. Should further information be needed, please give the office a call. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Richard Groden
President

cc: Sarah Eaton, Planner
City of Miami